

THE SCHOOL KITCHEN TEXTBOOK

LESSONS IN COOKING AND DOMESTIC SCIENCE
FOR THE USE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ILLUSTRATED



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CHAPTER XV

LAYING THE TABLE

These directions are not intended merely for occasional dinners. They are for every-day home life; and though every detail may not be adapted to all families, yet any housekeeper, no matter how limited her means, who has a table, a cloth to cover it, and dishes for food, may follow the principal suggestions. Habits of order and neatness may be cultivated at a pine table, with twenty-five cent table-linen, and the cheapest crockery. Meals may be served in a proper way, even if one cannot follow every change which fashion may suggest.

First, air the room; wipe the table and cover with a silence cloth. Place the center of the cloth in the center of the table, and have the middle fold uppermost, and straight with the edge of the table.

The space at the table occupied by the furnishings for one person is called a "cover" and the furnishings are called the "service." In common parlance it is called a place. Allow about twenty inches for each cover, more for a meal of several courses. Arrange the service about one inch from the edge of the table. Leave a clearly defined space between each cover that there may be no question as to which cover the service belongs.

In the center of each cover lay a plate inside up; one plate at each end of the table and those at the sides opposite each other; or if the table be round arrange the covers at equal distances apart.

When bare tables are used place a doily under each plate.

At breakfast or dinner where hot plates are needed, place them all in a pile in front of the one who sits at the head of the

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table and serves the main dishes. This person is usually called the host, and the person at the opposite end who serves the coffee, cereal, or soup, salad, and dessert, is called the hostess.

At the right of the plate lay first the knife with the sharp edge toward the plate, then the spoon with the inside of bowl up, the spoon needed first at the outside, the ends of handles even with edge of the plate; a tumbler with top up just above the tip of the knife.

At the left lay the fork next the plate, the tines up and handle in line with those on the right; beyond the fork lay the napkin folded in a square with initial on top and right side up. Small fringed napkin may be folded diagonally. At upper left corner, opposite the tumbler, place the bread and butter plate with butter spreader laid across one side, handle toward the right.

At a meal of several courses, lay each cover with the service needed according to the menu; the forks and spoons in the order in which they are to be used, those needed first on the outer edge. When there are many covers, lay the forks and spoons as needed with each course.

Fruit spoons and knives, or oyster forks, may be laid across the others at the right. For courses needing only a fork, place the fork at right.

The dessert service may be brought in with the plates for that course.

At breakfast or supper arrange the coffee, or tea, and hot water at the right of the hostess, the tray bowl, sugar bowl and cream pitcher in front and the cups and saucers at the left, with sugar tongs and cream ladle at hand.

At luncheon or dinner, lay a soup ladle and other large spoons as needed in front of the hostess.

Put the carving knife and fork on the carving rests at the right and left of the host, a little in front of his cover. Lay the butter knife beside the butter plate, and such other spoons, knives, or forks where they may be needed for serving the various dishes.

Fruit or flowers if used should occupy the center of the table and a low arrangement is preferable.

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The salt and pepper may be between each two covers; and the vinegar and oil, pickles or jelly at convenient distances, near the corners or between the larger dishes.

Arrange the various dishes on the table in regular order, straight with the table edge and exactly in front of those who are to serve them; or, if at an angle let there be some uniformity.

The cups, plates, and dishes for hot food should be heated as needed. Glasses should be filled and bread and butter put on the table just before the meal is served.

Finger bowls are considered by some people a luxury and are not usually placed on the table until the dessert; but there are other times when they are equally necessary, and there is no reason why they should not be used. When fruit is used as a first course at breakfast, they may be put on about one fourth full of warm water, at the beginning of the meal. When sweet corn is served on the cob finger bowls are almost indispensable. They are more easily washed than napkins.

Arrange the chairs so that the front edge of the seat is just even with the edge of the table.

In announcing the meal do not ring the bell when there are invited guests, but tell the hostess or the family that dinner is served.

In simple family life a bell, or a Japanese gong is allowable, but it would be better to have a regular hour for each meal and then for all to come promptly at that hour.

In gathering about the daily family table observe the same rules of courtesy as on formal occasions. The father or son should wait upon mother, or any guest, or elderly person, and see that they are comfortably seated. Children should follow in an orderly manner and all be seated at the same time.

No one, especially school children, and those who have been at hard labor, should come to the table without first washing face and hands and tidying the hair.

Girls should don a clean apron if the dress be soiled and must be worn for the after meal work, and in hot weather boys should cover soiled shirt sleeves with a thin, clean house jacket.

CHAPTER XVI

WAITING ON THE TABLE

There is no excuse for the sort of every-one-for-himself style of serving at table which is too often seen. Children, boys as well as girls, should be taught and allowed to help in the serving, even if one have a waitress. If they can have a daily share in the duties, filling the glasses, passing butter or sauce, removing the dishes between the courses, etc., nothing will give them more ease and self-possession when unexpectedly called to fill the place of mother or father at the table, or better help to counteract the evil habits of hurried eating and indifference to the wants of others, or better enable them to direct if they should ever have homes and maids of their own. The following general directions may be adapted to any style of living.

If the serving be done wholly by the family, special pains should be taken, in laying the table, to provide everything necessary, that there may be no occasion to leave the table. Spoons for tea or sauce may be laid at the plates, butter-plates and glasses filled, and other things made ready before the family are seated.

At breakfast, nearly every one wants coffee or other drink first, and there should be no undue haste in passing the substantial until this has been served. Ascertain the preference of each one as to sugar and cream, and put them in the cups, instead of passing them separately.

Do not fill the plates indiscriminately, and send them to go the round of the table, but consult individual tastes or needs, and give each one the opportunity of choice as to the various dishes. Serve first those whom you wish most to honor, and name the one for whom the plate is prepared.

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It makes less confusion for some one to sit near the one who carves, and to help to the vegetables and various dishes that are to be served on the same plate with the meat, instead of passing them back and forth. Be careful to pass all the accompaniments with the principal dishes, — the butter and syrup with hot cakes, the cream and sugar with mush and fruit, the condiments and relishes where they are needed, and avoid having many things passing around at the same time.

There are many families where the lady of the house is the only person who can leave the table to arrange for the change of courses, but if there be other and younger members of the family capable of such service, it should be performed by them. No girl, old enough to carry a dish without breaking it, should ever permit her mother to leave the table for any such purpose. A side table on casters may be placed within easy reach, and have on it extra dishes and part or the whole of the last course. It will save much confusion in the serving.

Whether the waitress be one trained to the work, or one of the children, the same rules will apply. The waitress should remove the cover from the tureen or any other dish, turning it over deftly so that it will not drip on the cloth, and lay it on the side table. Stand at the right of the one who is serving, and take on the tray each plate in turn to the one for whom it is intended.

In passing a plate of soup or meat go to the right of the person served and set it on the table directly in front of him. The cup of coffee or any other drink place at the right hand, and thus avoid reaching across the plate, and also relieve the one at the table from the awkwardness of taking the dish from the tray as would be the case if you were at the left.

But in passing vegetables or any dishes from which a person is to take a portion, pass them at the left, that the portion may be taken with the right hand. The dish should be held firmly, and low and near enough that it may be within easy reach. Put the tablespoon into the dish with the handle toward the right and loosen a portion that there may be no trouble in taking it.

Provide a serving fork also for spaghetti, macaroni, and such foods as are not mashed or finely divided.

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In passing a plate hold it so the thumb will not rest on the upper surface. In filling glasses, take the glass near the bottom, never with the hand over the top, draw it to the edge of the table, but do not remove it, and fill only three-quarters full. When a change of plates is required, remove the plate on the table with the left hand, before attempting to put the other plate in its place.

Briefly the points to be remembered are these.

Serve or place the filled cup or plate at the right.

Offer for choice at the left.

After all are served put the food dishes back on the table in their places, or on the serving table, and keep everything on the table in order.

At a dinner of many courses, as soon as a guest has finished the course remove his plate with the knife and fork and place it on the side table, then return and remove anything not needed for the next course.

At the family dinner do not remove any plates until all are through. When one course is finished, take the tray in one hand, and with the other remove from the left all the spoons, or knives and forks; this will prevent the danger of dropping them if taken away on the plates, and make less confusion in washing. Take away the plates, never more than one in each hand; and also everything not needed for the next course. Before the dessert, remove the crumbs with a folded napkin into a plate.

After a meal, first set the chairs in their places, and always brush up the crumbs that may have fallen, lest they be trodden into the carpet. In clearing a breakfast or tea table, where there has been no change of courses, remove the food first that it may not deteriorate by standing. Put butter and milk away at once, and any food that may be used again on small dishes and in suitable places.

Then remove glasses, silver, and plates.

Scrape the dishes, empty and rinse the cups, and pack neatly together those of a kind, near where they are to be washed. Brush the crumbs from the cloth, fold it in the creases, and put it away carefully. Put the dining room in order, and remove any odor of the meal by ventilation.

CHAPTER XVII

TABLE MANNERS

There is no place where it is more essential, or where there is a better opportunity to observe the golden rule, than at the daily home table.

“If you please,” and “No, I thank you,” are in far better taste than “Yes, thanks,” and “No, thanks.” Accept what is offered or placed before you; but should your preference be asked, and you have any, it is allowable to name it at once. When a plate has been filled for you, keep it, and do not from mistaken courtesy pass it to the next person. Make some sign of acknowledgment for what is served you, either by an inclination of the head or a quiet “thank you,” whether it be offered by those presiding at the table or by the waitress. Courtesy to all, and especially to a child or a servant, should be the daily habit.

In family serving, wait until all are helped before you begin to eat, and be on the alert to assist in the serving as much as possible. But where there are trained waiters and several courses, begin as soon as you are helped that there may be no delay.

Keep the spoon in the saucer, because if left in the cup, both may be overturned.

Do not talk or drink while food is in the mouth.

Take your soup quietly, from the side of the spoon, lest in bending your arm to put the end of the spoon in your mouth you interfere with your next neighbor. Dip it into the plate *from* instead of toward you, and thus avoid dripping the soup.

Break the bread or roll, and eat it separately, not in the soup, because it is awkward to take the bread from the side

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of the spoon. Never lay the bread on the table while spreading it with butter, nor bite from a large piece. Break off a small portion, and spread with butter as needed.

Use the knife only as a divider; use the fork to convey the food to the mouth. Do not pile food on the back of the fork, but pick it up with the fork, or when necessary hold the fork inside up and use it as you would a spoon.

When not using the knife for cutting lay it across the further side of your plate. Do not rest the handle on the cloth.

In passing your plate for a second portion, leave the knife and fork side by side at the right edge of the plate. It is allowable to lay them across the bread and butter plate, but not to hold them in the hand or lay them on the cloth.

Portions of food that cannot be swallowed, like grape skins, seeds, cherry stones, or bits of bone, should not be dropped from the mouth on to the plate; but by covering the lips with the hand it may be dropped into the thumb and forefinger without betraying to others the nature of the act.

During the meal keep everything about your plate as neat as possible, and after passing anything put it back in its place.

When your meal or one course is finished, place the knife and fork in the center of the plate, the tines up that they may not slip, and handles directly in front, that they may not be in the way in removing the plate. This signifies to a trained waitress that you are ready to have your plate removed.

At the close of the meal fold your napkin, that the table may be left in an orderly condition.

Whether serving, waiting, or eating, do everything quietly, easily, and neatly. Never be so absorbed in your own enjoyment of a meal as to be unmindful of the needs of others.

If you are in doubt as to what to do, imitate as far as possible those whose habits show that their opportunities for cultivating good manners have been superior to yours; but on the other hand, when with those whose privileges are less than yours, make no pretentious or unnecessary display, and never cause any one discomfort by noticing any habit that may not be in accordance with your notions. Should you be at a table where butter-knives are not provided, it

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would be more courteous quietly to use your own knife than to call attention to the omission. Should a friend prefer sugar and vinegar, rather than French dressing on lettuce, or prefer to eat celery with the other dishes instead of by itself, do not call attention to these or other personal preferences.

It is not a breach of good manners if you happen to eat your oysters with the common fork because you are unfamiliar with the one provided for that purpose, or choose a small spoon instead of a large one for your soup; but it is unpardonable to annoy others by eating or drinking noisily, or smacking the lips, or by picking the teeth at the table or doing anything that would interfere with another person's liberty or enjoyment. And it is equally unpardonable and even more impolite to be annoyed by anything in others whom you are not at liberty to correct and whose intentions are kind though some of their habits may be awkward. No matter how you may feel or what the blunder or accident may be, never show any displeasure to either servant or guest.

Many more hints might be given but the following general suggestion will apply to every occasion.

In table etiquette any custom is commendable that is based on the golden rule, or is sanctioned by those whose general behavior — not table manners, merely — shows that good-breeding with them means, *not selfishness*, but thoughtfulness for others. But all notions whose root is in a desire to imitate persons whose style of living is pretentious, and whose tastes and habits are capricious are worse than useless. They destroy alike our happiness and our self-respect.